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CHINA PAINTING—IV.

By MRS. N. R. MONACHESI.



CHINA painting, like every other art, requires time to learn, for there are many difficulties to overcome. If it was so easy that anybody could do it, there would be no merit in it. Neither can the art be acquired all at once; it takes time to know the possibilities of the materials, and a vast amount of experience and experiments to feel sure of results. But do not easily be discouraged. Make a serious effort and earnest attempt in the right direction at the outset, and with determination, patience and perseverance you will be able to overcome every difficulty. These qualities belong just as much in the list of necessary materials as colors and brushes.

The sole excuse and reason for dwelling to some extent on this subject is the numerous examples the writer has too often seen of cross-eyed, knock-kneed little monstrosities called cupids, so that she is compelled right here to utter a protest against their continuance. Therefore let your motto be, if unable to draw correctly and you must paint cupids, to trace them by all means.

But it must be remembered there is an art even in tracing. Great care must be exercised to trace exactly on the outlines,

tine is used more sparingly, as the glaze on the china prevents the absorption, as is the case with paper, with an excess of water.

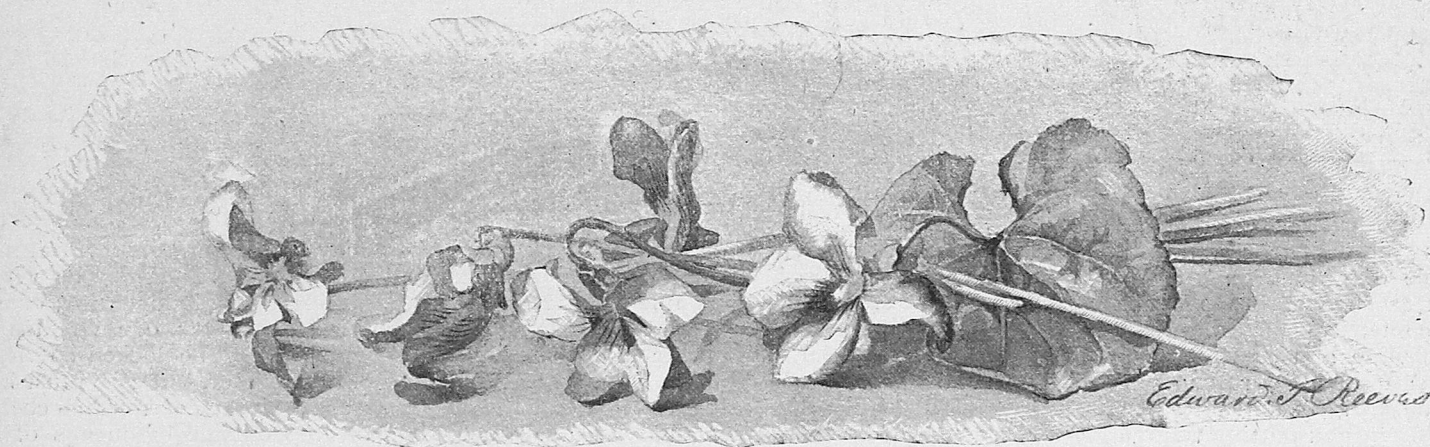
The thick or fat oil is the residuum left after the spirits of turpentine has evaporated. No one need ever buy it, but make it for themselves. It is only a question of time, for the evaporation cannot be hastened by artificial heat. A word as to "tinting oils" and so-called "mediums" is quite appropriate here. There are but few oils, comparatively speaking, that are called into requisition in china painting. Lavender, cloves, aniseed, tar, spike and balsam of copaiba are those most universally used, and the various tinting oils and mediums that flood the market are but different combinations and compounds of these. "Taking out mixtures" are another "delusion and a snare" that rope in the unwary but willing victim.

Experiment for yourself on these above-named oils, and continue to use that or those with which you can best manage and attain the best results.

You will find they are used solely with regard to their drying qualities, some of them requiring a longer time than others, and are therefore useful where it is desirable to keep the color "open" for any given time.

All these are points best settled by the individual, irrespective of another's experience; for what is best adapted for one person's work may not be at all so well suited to another's.

There is, however, one oil it is perhaps better to buy ready made, and that what is called "grounding" oil. This



VIOLETS. BY EDWARD T. REEVES.

and not a hair's breadth inside or outside of the copy. In tracing it is necessary to go over every line three times—once on the transparent tracing paper, then after placing this on the carbon paper again, and finally with the India ink on the china. Now, if a line somewhere is a little out of drawing in the first instance, this defect on each succeeding drawing will become more pronounced. These are not idle cautions, but stern facts to be followed. It may seem a good deal to remember, but there is no other alternative if you cannot draw. It is the penalty we pay for the deficiency in our education, training and experience.

The next things to procure are a bottle of fresh spirits of turpentine, a bottle of "thick" or "fat oil" and another of lavender oil. If the latter is offensive, as it is to some, oil of cloves will answer the same purpose, or procure some tinting oil.

The spirits of turpentine is used as a medium to paint with, as water is used by water colorists, only the turpen-

is only used where the color is dusted on. Pour some of this oil out, and dilute with spirits of turpentine, more or less, as strength of color is wanted. The more turpentine the paler will be the tint. If a very pale shade be required, it is best not to use this method, but apply the color with the brush in the ordinary manner.

But when a deep, dark color is desirable, in its full strength and of even, uniform tint, ground lay the color. If this grounding oil is colored, say slightly with lamp black, it is easier to detect inequalities in its manipulation.

Apply with a brush, and then pad till of uniform density, and when it is in a "tacky" condition, gently dust on the color—which is in a dry powder form—by dipping a piece of raw cotton in it and lightly pouncing the china with it. When all is on that will adhere, carefully brush—with a very soft brush—all the surplus powder off, and set away to dry. It takes some considerable time to dry—hours, sometimes days—and if allowed to be handled before thoroughly

dry and hard is apt to be defaced, and it is a difficult task to restore a blemish so made.

A china tile, six or eight inches square, is the customary palette. Some use a piece of ground glass instead. Two minor sources of annoyance mitigate against this in favor of the china tile. The latter is more easily cleansed, and it is not so easy to see exactly the color on glass, as it is semi-transparent, and more or less affected by whatever it rests upon. If a glass palette is used, secure a piece of white paper beneath it. A small palette knife is requisite, and lots of old, soft, clean rags are indispensable.

Having now secured all necessary materials to paint with, select a piece of china to paint on. A plate or tray is best to begin with, as they are easy to work on. They present a flat surface, and are not so awkward to hold as vases, lamps, or even cups and saucers. Then select a suitable design. Much could be written on this subject, but not here. A few suggestions will be sufficient. Make your design suitable to the shape of the article to be decorated. Give it the trend of the form, and do not paint straight, stiff, growing plants on round objects. Neither reduce large flowers to diminutive dimensions. Never attempt to paint miniature peonies or sunflowers on tiny articles, nor, *vice versa*, attempt to cover a large jardinière with small flowers unless it is to represent what is called Dresden style, which consists of a sprinkling of tiny blossoms over the entire surface. This

violet of gold, ruby purple and deep blue-green, a very wide scope for shades of violet is afforded. With the light violet of gold and a little ruby purple a very rich, brilliant hue can be secured, while with the deep violet of gold, modified with deep blue-green, a variety of cool tones may be had. Paint the flowers in the direction they grow—let the trend of the brush sweep either from or toward the centre. The centre of a violet is a tinge of yellow (silver yellow) and a tiny speck of red (deep red-brown). The greens are obtained from either chrome or emerald stone green, made much lighter by the addition of yellow for mixing. Shade with brown-green No. 6. The stems of the flowers are green.

In the arbutus the stems are woody and are made of browns. The flowers are a pale, delicate shade of pink. Use carmine No. 1, very thin.

A USEFUL MEDICINE CHEST.

BY EVA MARIE KENNEDY.

A MEDICINE chest is an almost indispensable adjunct to every well-appointed home, for, unless such a receptacle is kept for all the various remedies of the ills that human flesh is heir to, there is sure to be confusion, and in many instances much valuable time is lost in case of acci-



ARBUTUS. BY EDWARD T. REEVES.

style is going out now, and is not held in such high favor as a couple of years ago. It too closely resembles calico and the patterns frequently met with on printed India silks.

If geometrical designs are attempted they must be perfect in every line and curve, or they are not worthy consideration. A good border for a plate with a floral design can always be had by conventionalizing the same flower, or by analyzing it, and putting to practical use some one part of it.

Beware of mixing epochs and of using the ornamental border or rococo design characteristic of one century with that of another. Promiscuous designing by those ignorant of the elementary and rudimentary principles of the grammar of ornament are a never-ending source of amusement and ridicule by those who have made this a study and recognize at a glance such synchronisms in art.

VIOLET AND ARBUTUS MOTIVES FOR CHINA PAINTING.

THE accompanying designs, by Mr. Edward T. Reeves, may be painted on some of the long and narrow trays just as they are, or they could be adjusted or adapted to some other shapes. One is the ordinary wood violet, and the other the sweet-scented arbutus, that welcome harbinger of early spring.

These flowers should be treated in a simple manner, and care should be taken to follow the lights and shades, or they will not be true to nature. With deep violet of gold, light

dent. This medicine chest may be bought at any furniture dealer's or cabinet-maker's establishment, and may be very simple in construction, and consequently inexpensive, or it might be quite elaborate. A very pretty one could be made of oak, having a door which could be locked so that little hands would be kept out of danger, but care must be taken to keep the key in a convenient place. This chest should be nicely decorated on the outside by means of a shelf at the top, a small mirror and some artistic carving. But for general purposes nothing could be better or more convenient than a set of oak shelves, having a curtain of blue denim, embroidered in conventional designs with black silk Roman floss, attached to a small brass rod with rings.

Another idea which might be within the means of everyone would be to procure an ordinary wooden box, and paint it the same shade as the woodwork of the room. A neat curtain, consisting of flowered cretonne, art sateen or linen, embroidered with several shades of yellow Asiatic filo silk floss, should hide the contents from view.

The bathroom is generally admitted to be the most convenient place for the medicine chest to be kept, but circumstances might be such as to suggest another apartment as being more appropriate. In it should be found the temporary relief for a severe headache, the mustard for the foot-bath, or the invaluable plaster, for which, however, might be substituted the more convenient mustard leaves; vaseline or pure sweet oil, which would be found to be invaluable for burns; oil of cloves, seidlitz powders, and citrate of magnesia.